

School Improvement for Accreditation

One accreditation requirement of both the Nebraska Department of Education and of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCACASI) is that schools engage in a school improvement process. The models and processes recommended by each agency share many of the same features. This guide will address the process designed primarily for those districts and schools that are meeting the Nebraska accreditation requirements.

NEBRASKA ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

Rule 10, Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools, includes the following statements regarding school improvement. Items 009.01A through 009.01B are requirements of all Nebraska public schools and accredited nonpublic schools.

009 School Improvement.

009.01 Quality Indicator: A systematic on-going process guides planning, implementation, and evaluation and renewal of school improvement activities to meet local and statewide goals and priorities. The school improvement process focuses on improving student learning. The process includes a periodic review by visiting educators who provide consultation to the local school/community in continued accomplishment of plans and goals.

009.01A The school system develops and implements a school improvement process to promote quality learning for all students. This process includes procedures and strategies to address quality learning, equity, and accountability. In public schools, the process incorporates multicultural education as described in 004.01G. In all school systems, the school improvement process includes the following activities at least once within each five years.

009.01A1 Review and update of a mission or vision statement.

009.01A2 Collection and analysis of data about student performance, demographics, learning climate, and former high school students.

009.01A3 Selection of improvement goals. At least one goal is directed toward improving student performance.

009.01A4 Development and implementation of a plan which includes procedures, strategies, or actions to achieve goals.

009.01A5 Evaluation of progress toward improvement goals.

009.01B The school improvement process includes a visitation by a team of external representatives to review progress and provide written recommendations. A copy of the written recommendations is provided to the Department. The external team visits are conducted at least once each five years.

NORTH CENTRAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCACASI) a regional accreditation agency requires that schools be involved in an improvement process that includes the following:

- Meeting the Strategic Planning Criteria (section SP) of the NCA CASI Standard and Criteria
- Selecting goals based on an analysis of local assessment data and other information
- Focusing on goals to improve student performance
- Implementing an improvement plan that includes strategies and a staff development plan
- Preparing a Documentation Report showing progress in achieving the goals
- Hosting a Quality Assurance Review (External Team Visit) at least once each five years.

Additional information is available at: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/nca/nca.html> and the Commission web site: <http://www.ncacasi.org>.

INCORPORATING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Public school districts are required in Rule 10 (accreditation) to incorporate multicultural education in the school improvement process. Multicultural education has many aspects, but always includes a concern for equity. Equity can be examined through analysis of achievement patterns. Do these patterns suggest that disproportionate numbers of racial or ethnic minorities tend to be concentrated in certain classes or be minimally represented in others? Equity also includes concern for achievement. When class rankings, honor roll membership, ACT scores, and other indicators are examined through disaggregation, are some groups notable by their absence? Disaggregation of data is a necessary component of the multicultural program. Disaggregation allows a staff to see beneath the surface. If an overall dropout rate of less than 2 percent includes a rate of over 30 percent of a particular ethnic sub-group of students, what appears on the surface to be strength may actually be a concern. This analysis and identification of equity needs should assist staff members in selecting and including Action Plan strategies and activities to meet the needs of all students.